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2007-2008**

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HUNDREDS OF POLICE CHIEFS,
SHERIFFS, PROSECUTORS, OTHER LAW
ENFORCEMENT LEADERS, AND
VIOLENCE SURVIVORS PREVENTING
CRIME AND VIOLENCE

**Testimony on HBs 4091 & 4162 -- House Education Committee
By K.P. Pelleran, State Director,
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Michigan
March 13, 2007**

On behalf of FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS MICHIGAN, an organization of more than 400 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and crime survivors and part of an organization of 3500 law enforcement leaders across the country, I'm delighted to be here today as you discuss anti-bullying legislation and to offer our support for HBs 4091 & 4162.

In our national report entitled, "Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention," it shows that new anti-aggression programs can prevent up to half of all bullying which now affects one out of three children in grades six to ten and can lead to violent crime and death. Amplifying this matter is cyber-bullying.

Ideally, law enforcement leaders would like our policy-makers to require that the proven bullying prevention programs, such as those outlined in our report, be implemented in every school.

If implemented, these programs will prevent thousands of Michigan's young people from going through the agony of bullying, prevent teen suicides, and prevent kids from escalating bullying to higher levels of crime and violence.

Bullying is a serious concern of law enforcement. It's not just "boys being boys." The report shows:

- For children in sixth through tenth grade, nearly one in six —3.2 million—are victims of bullying each year. An additional 3.7 million bully other children.
- Kids who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed than other kids, and also far more likely to be suicidal.
- Bullies are much more likely than other kids to carry a weapon to school.
- A study in Norway showed that four of every ten boys who bullied others as kids had three or more convictions by the time they turned 24.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids members believe that bullying is a ticking time bomb in our schools and our society. We need to defuse this problem before more children are harmed, killed or take their own lives.

However, creating untested programs and calling them “bullying prevention” doesn’t work. Our report identifies newly tested programs that have cut bullying by as much as half, including:

- A program developed in Norway that produced a 50 percent reduction of bullying there, and a 20 percent reduction when it was replicated in South Carolina.

- A program for fifth graders called LIFT that cut in half the number of kids arrested by the eighth grade, compared to arrests of kids in similar schools without the program.

- The Incredible Years program which has been able to stop a cycle of aggression in almost two-thirds of the families receiving help.

None of these bullying prevention programs require huge investments. When preventing one child from adopting a life of crime saves \$1.7 million, the modest investment required to implement anti-bullying programs will be recovered many times over.

Because bullying prevention is crime prevention, every school should have a proven anti-bullying program. Doing so will take us one step closer to making us all safer from crime and violence.

That’s why Fight Crime: Invest in Kids’ police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and victims of violence are calling on local, state and federal policy makers to invest in proven anti-bullying measures for every school in Michigan.

When violence occurs in school or out of school, law enforcement must act appropriately. Yet it’s far wiser to act before anyone gets hurt. Let’s invest in our kids so they never become bullies, victims of bullies or adult criminals.

Thank you.

To download a copy of the report, “Bullying Prevention is Crime Prevention,” visit www.fightcrime.org where you can also find a copy of our 2006 cyber-bullying poll of teens.

For Kids' views on bullying visit
<http://www.familiesandwork.org/askthechildren.html>

Bullying Prevention Is Crime Prevention

A research brief by

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

This brief is based on a report by FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS, an anti-crime group of over 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, victims of violence, youth violence experts and leaders of police associations. The report's authors are: James Alan Fox, The Lipman Family Professor of Criminal Justice, Northeastern University; Delbert S. Elliott, Director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado; Seattle Chief of Police R. Gil Kerlikowske; and FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS' president Sanford Newman and research director William Christeson. For the full report and citations for this brief, see www.fightcrime.org.

A report from
Law Enforcement

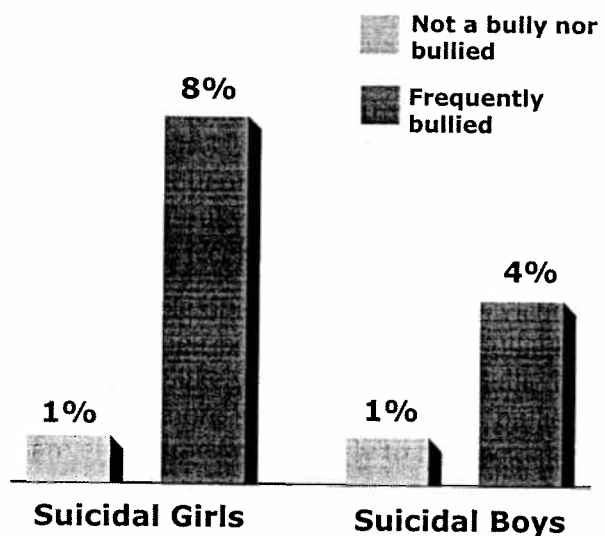
One in Six Students are Victims of Bullying

Bullying is commonly defined as aggressive behavior or intentional "harm doing," carried out repeatedly, and targeted towards someone less powerful. A national survey found that nearly one in six American children in sixth through tenth grade—more than 3.2 million children—are moderate to frequent victims of bullying each year. And 3.7 million bully other children "sometimes" to "several times a week."

How miserable does bullying make its victims? Compared to their peers, kids who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed. Bullied boys are four times more likely to be suicidal; bullied girls are eight times more likely to be suicidal.

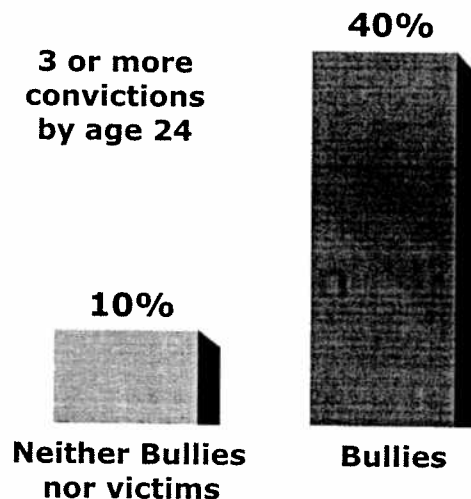
But recent research shows that successful programs can prevent half or more of bullying. They also reduce the risk of future crime.

Frequently Bullied Kids More Suicidal



British Medical Journal

Boys Who Bully Are More Likely To Commit Crimes



Blueprints for Violence Prevention

Bullies and Crime

Around the world, bullying is an early warning sign that children and youths may be headed down a path to more serious antisocial behavior. A large U.S. study found that the most serious bullies (those who frequently bullied others both in and out of school) were seven times more likely to report they had carried a weapon to school in the prior month.

And a study conducted in Sweden showed that nearly 60 percent of boys who researchers classified as bullies in grades six through nine were convicted of at least one crime by age 24. Even more dramatic, 40 percent of the boys who were bullies had three or more convictions by age 24.

A Secret Service study of school shootings found that the victims of bullying sometimes lash out and that "almost three-quarters of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured

by others prior to the incident.”

Acting decisively to stop bullying and teach bullies new ways to interact with their peers will prevent much suffering now while reducing future crime.

Proven Programs Can Cut Bullying in Half — and Sharply Reduce Crime

Research clearly shows that half or more of all bullying can be prevented. Thus far, three model programs that were rigorously designed and tested have been proven to be highly effective.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program—First developed in Norway after the suicide of a number of boys who had been bullied, the program has now been implemented in several hundred schools in the United States and around the world. It produced a 50 percent reduction in bullying in Norway and a 20 percent reduction in a South Carolina test.

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)—LIFT shows long-term results are possible from a ten-week anti-aggression program. Compared to LIFT participants, fifth graders whose schools did not receive the program were 59 percent more likely to drink alcohol regularly by eighth grade, and two times more likely to have been arrested during middle school than those who received the program.

The Incredible Years—Originally designed for children ages two to eight with high levels of aggressive behavior, the program trains parents

and children in problem-solving skills and non-aggressive social skills. It has stopped the high levels of aggression for approximately two-thirds of the families receiving help. (For contact information on these three programs see: <http://www.fightcrime.org/bullyingcontacts.php>).

Money Well Spent

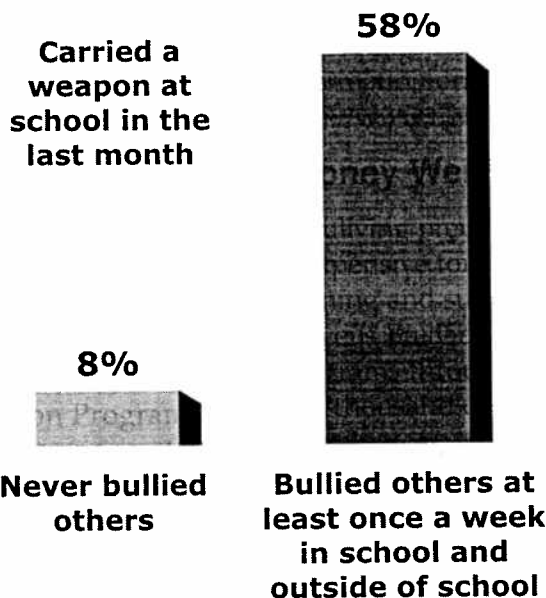
Bullying prevention programs are relatively inexpensive for the results they deliver. The upfront training and supply cost for delivering both the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and LIFT programs throughout a school district are only a few thousand dollars. Safe and Drug-Free Schools coordinators, who are currently funded in almost every school district in America, could administer The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Modest funds will typically be needed to implement LIFT and The Incredible Years programs.

These investments will more than pay for themselves by reducing special education costs and future crime. For example, special education classes for 12 years for one child with emotional problems can cost \$100,000 more than regular schooling. Professor Mark A. Cohen of Vanderbilt University estimated that each high-risk juvenile prevented from adopting a life of crime could save the country \$1.7 million.

Law enforcement leaders and researchers agree: bullying is not

just sad, it's dangerous. Every school should adopt a proven bullying prevention program to save money and lives.

Serious Bullies More Likely to Carry Weapons to School



Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine

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Source citation and other research are available at www.fightcrime.org

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11/17/03



3,000 Police Chiefs, Sheriffs,
Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement
Leaders, and Violence Survivors
Preventing Crime and Violence

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**1 of 3 Teens and 1 of 6 Preteens
Are Victims of Cyber Bullying**
Teenager Recounts Harrowing Tale of Online Death Threats

WASHINGTON DC, August 17 — As America's kids prepare to go back to school, national law enforcement leaders released a poll showing that one in three teens and one in six preteens have been victims of cyber bullying. The leaders estimate that more than 13 million children aged 6 to 17 were victims of cyber bullying. More than 2 million of those victims told no one about the attacks.

Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff and Charlotte Chief of Police Darryl Stephens released the poll and called on every school in America to have a proven bullying prevention program.

Key findings of the poll of 1,000 kids nationwide were:

- One-third of all teens (12-17) and one-sixth of children ages 6-11 have had mean, threatening or embarrassing things said about them online.
- 10 percent of the teens and four percent of the younger children were threatened online with physical harm.
- 16 percent of the teens and preteens who were victims told no one about it. About half of children ages 6-11 told their parents. Only 30 percent of older kids told their parents.
- Preteens were as likely to receive harmful messages at school (45 percent) as at home (44 percent). Older children received 30 percent of harmful messages at school and 70 percent at home.
- 17 percent of preteens and seven percent of teens said they were worried about bullying as they start a new school year.

The poll was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation for Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a national, nonprofit, bipartisan organization of more than 3,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids takes a hard look at the research to find out what works to prevent kids from turning to a life of crime.

At the news conference, 15-year-old cyber bullying victim Kylie Kenney from Vermont described a website that called for her death and the years of threatening and embarrassing phone calls and emails that she received from classmates. She was forced to transfer schools twice as well as be home schooled for a semester due to the cyber bullying.

"No child should have to endure the cyber bullying I endured. I was scared, hurt and confused. I didn't know why it was happening to me. I had nowhere to turn except to my Mom. I am speaking out now because I want other kids who are bullied online or on their cell phones to know that they should tell their parents or other adults. You don't have to put up with it. Something can be done," said Kenney.

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Cyber bullying is the use of electronic devices and information, such as e-mail, instant messaging (IM), text messages, mobile phones, pagers and web sites, to send or post cruel or harmful messages or images about an individual or a group. This is a freer form of bullying than traditional physical or name-calling attacks as the individual responsible can be anonymous. Also, unlike standard bullying, there is no respite or refuge for the victims since cyber bullying can go on 24-hours a day and invade a victim's home.

"While millions of America's kids are being attacked by email, phone, text message or on web sites, cyber bullying must be arrested," said Shurtleff. He called on every school to adopt a comprehensive anti-bullying program.

Research has found that the Olweus Bullying Prevention program started in Norway and now implemented in South Carolina and other states has the strongest results on reducing bullying. The Olweus program can cut bullying in half. More information on this program can be found at www.fightcrime.org.

Stephens said that cyber bullying can be a crime and research shows that bullying can lead to later crime.

Stephens released 10 steps on how to prevent cyber bullying. Key steps include:

- Teach your kids to tell adults if they're bullied
- Every school must have a proven anti-bullying program
- Watch for signs that your child may be a victim
- Keep computers in common areas of homes

"America's law enforcement leaders are providing families with 10 practical steps to delete cyber bullying from the current favorites list. Congress can take one step by passing bullying prevention legislation so every school in the country will establish a proven anti-bullying program," Stephens said.

Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill) has introduced a bill to help schools to establish proven bullying prevention programs.

David Kass, Executive Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, said "In the coming school year, 13 million kids will be victims of cyber bullying. Law enforcement leaders across the country urge that every school in America should have an Olweus Bullying Prevention program to keep kids safe."

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